

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended): A method for operating a dishwasher comprising:

(a) loading a dishwasher with items in need of washing;

(b) closing said loaded dishwasher;

(c) ~~steam cleaning~~ steaming said items in a water saturated atmosphere at a pressure of equal to or greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of equal to or greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes; and

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B2 (d) after said steaming, washing said items ⁱⁿ~~in~~ said dishwasher with soap and water to clean said items,

wherein said steaming is conducted prior to any washing with water.

2. (currently amended): In a method for operating a dishwasher where items in a closed dishwasher are washed with soap and water and subsequently dried, the improvement comprising steaming said items in a closed dishwasher prior to said items being washed with ~~soap and~~ water, said steam cleaning being conducted in a water saturated atmosphere, at a pressure of equal to or greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of equal to or greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes.